

LESSON 42

# The Great Commission

MATTHEW 28:16-20



BIBLE TRUTH

THE GOSPEL FULFILLS GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

**LESSON SNAPSHOT**

**1. OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

**2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read Matthew 28:16–20 from the Scriptures or read story 120, “The Great Commission,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**3. OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Authority and Doubting**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a paper airplane
- ✓ pants or skirt with belt loops—wear to class
- ✓ two 10-foot lengths of heavy cord
- ✓ two 6-foot pieces of sewing thread

**4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION**

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

**5. OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**The Great Clay Mission**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ modeling clay or play dough (at least three different colors)—enough for each student to have three different colored walnut-sized pieces

**6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

**7. ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Seeing the Unreached**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ✓ map of the world



LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER ..... 5 MIN
9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON ..... 25 MIN

**The Mission to Reach the Nations Is Not Over**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ information on ten unreached people groups (obtained by contacting a local mission agency or doing a search on the Internet)
- ✓ ten index cards

**TOTAL 95 MIN**

## PREPARING TO TEACH

## TEACHING POINTS

**Some of the disciples struggled to believe**—The eleven disciples were asked to meet Jesus on a particular mountain. When they saw Jesus, some worshiped him, while others doubted. Rather than rebuke those who doubted, Jesus commissioned them all! What an encouragement to us when we struggle with our faith.

**Jesus commissioned the doubters**—In spite of the fact that some doubted, Jesus commissioned all eleven to go forth and teach all nations to obey everything he commanded, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Here, contained in a very small portion of Scripture, are some astounding truths. First, the apostles were not to limit their teaching to other Jews. They were to spread the teaching of Jesus to the Gentiles as well! Jesus applied this Great Commission to us as well. Jesus also revealed the doctrine of the Trinity here when he says we are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By including himself, Jesus again declared his deity.

**Jesus is with us as we go**—In Genesis we read that God spoke to Abraham, revealing that all of the nations of the earth were going to be blessed through him (Genesis 18:18). Abraham did not live to see the fulfillment of God’s promise to him, but in the Great Commission Jesus set the stage for its fulfillment. Jesus directed the disciples to take the message of the gospel to “all nations.” Lest the disciples think their task impossible, Jesus assured them that he would be with them always (Matthew 28:19–20). Today as we look to continue the work of taking the gospel to all nations, we should remember that we are not alone. The Spirit of Christ goes with us and before us, preparing the hearts of those who will believe. Whenever we run into difficulty, we need to remember that Jesus is with us. Whenever we doubt, we should remember that by his Spirit Jesus is near.

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

*Baptism*

It was not unusual for converts to Judaism to be baptized as a sign of their conversion, however John the Baptist preached something new—a baptism of repentance for all those Jews who had fallen away from God by their sinful lives (Matthew 3:11). Later, Jesus commanded that believers be baptized. In Acts, after Peter addressed the crowd in what might be considered the first large gospel presentation, he commanded them to “repent and be baptized” in keeping with the Lord’s command. Throughout the book of Acts, new converts are baptized.



Paul explains that our baptism is a picture of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4). The word “baptism” comes from the Greek word *baptizo*, which was used by the Greeks to describe the dyeing of a cloth or garment. This picture is most helpful and fits with the picture of burial and resurrection in Romans. The garment would be immersed into the water as one color and come out another.

## Where Is the Gospel?

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:16–20 is not found in the other Gospels, but has a companion passage in Luke. Jesus had earlier commissioned the disciples to spread the message of his death and resurrection (Luke 24:47). Both passages tell us that the gospel is to be preached to all nations. The salvation of Jesus Christ is not limited to the Jews, but is to go to all nations and all peoples. Matthew records that those who receive the message are to be baptized. That baptism, Paul later explains, is an identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus in the life of the individual believer (Romans 6:3–4).

## THE LESSON

### OPENING REVIEW ..... 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

### BIBLE STORY ..... 10 MIN

Read Matthew 28:16–20 from the Scriptures or read story 120, “The Great Commission,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

## OBJECT LESSON 1 ..... 15 MIN

**Authority and Doubting****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a paper airplane
- ✓ pants or skirt with belt loops—wear to class
- ✓ two 10-foot lengths of heavy cord
- ✓ two 6-foot pieces of sewing thread

Pose the following question: If I told your parents that you were throwing a paper airplane in class while I was teaching, what do you think they would say? (Their parents would not be pleased with their behavior.)

Then recruit two students, have them come forward, hand them the paper airplane, and tell them to throw it to each other. While they are doing this, talk to the children about the Scripture for today and how the Great Commission applies to people from every nation.

Stop the airplane-throwing and ask the children what defense they should use if their parents find out they were throwing paper airplanes in class. (The class should answer that you gave them permission.)

Use this as an object lesson to talk about authority and the difference it makes in the students' behavior. Jesus said he had all authority to command the disciples to go to all the nations. Help the children understand how important it is to understand the authority Jesus had in issuing the Great Commission.

Say, "As the teacher I have the authority to grant students permission to throw paper airplanes during class, something they would otherwise get into trouble for."

This second half of the object lesson is designed to illustrate our doubting faith as opposed to God's great strength to hold us.

Tie both the rope and the thread around a belt loop on your pants and tie the other ends to something stable like a desk or table. Since the thread is shorter, you will pull on it before the heavy cord.

Explain to the class that the thread represents your own faith in God and the cord represents God's faithfulness to us in Christ. Place a Bible on the desk or table and explain that our faith



(the thread) can keep us close to the Lord, but sin can draw us away. Even if we doubt and are drawn away toward sin so that our faith is broken (walk away from the Bible until the thread breaks), God is still faithful and keeps us from falling. Show them how the heavy cord holds you firmly. Read 2 Timothy 2:13 and explain that the Lord's faithfulness does not depend on our obedience or faith, but on the work of Jesus on the cross.

Read about the doubts of the disciples in Matthew 28:17 and ask the children why Jesus would commission these doubters. (The answer is that their success did not depend on their perfect faith, but on Jesus' perfect faithfulness.)

## TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

## OBJECT LESSON 2 ..... 15 MIN

### The Great Clay Mission

#### SUPPLIES:

- ✓ modeling clay or play dough (at least three different colors)—enough for each student to have three different colored walnut-sized pieces

In advance of the class, make a small clay person with eyes, mouth, arms, and legs to use as an example.

Pass out three different colored balls of clay to each child. (If you have more than fifteen students pass out the clay to several volunteers.) Explain that they are going to play the Great Clay Mission to help them learn about the Great Commission. Tell the class they are going to race to see who can mold three disciples out of clay in the shortest amount of time. Each disciple needs to be one color and have eyes, mouth, arms, and legs.

Just before you give the go-ahead to begin, say, "Go therefore and make disciples of all colors." Then give the word to begin.

While the children are molding their disciple figures, ask the following questions:

- **What is different about the different balls of clay?**  
(The clay comes in different colors.)

- **What is the same about the clay?**  
*(The clay composition is the same.)*
  
- **What is different about people that God reaches with the gospel?**  
*(They are from different nations, speak different languages, and have different skin colors.)*
  
- **What is common to all people regardless of their nationality or skin color?**  
*(All people are made in the image of God.)*
  
- **What did you use to mold your disciples?**  
*(your hands)*
  
- **What does God use?**  
*(his Word)*

Celebrate the winner and use this illustration to explain why the gospel goes forth in power to all men.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME** ..... **15 MIN**

**Seeing the Unreached**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ✓ map of the world

Get an outline map of the world and have the students color all the nations that have unreached people groups. You can get this information from a mission agency or the Internet. Have the children write the words, “Go and make disciples of all nations” across the top of their map.



**CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **25 MIN**

**The Mission to Reach the Nations Is Not Over**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ information on ten unreached people groups (obtained by contacting a local mission agency or doing a search on the Internet)
- ✓ ten index cards

On the cards write a short description of each unreached people group. Take time to review these with the students. Divide the class into groups of three, and have a time of prayer. Divide the cards evenly among the groups and position the groups in a large circle. Each team of students should pray two minutes for the people group on their card. Students can take turns praying. At the end of two minutes, shift cards to the right and begin praying again. Continue this until all the teams have prayed over all ten cards.

Ask the students how they were affected while they prayed for these people groups. Remind them that praying is an important component to seeing the Great Commission fulfilled.